

John 8:12

I want to begin out time this morning with John 8:20. After the incident that took place in the end of John 7, this incident that begins with verse 12 happened during the same time, the feast of the Tabernacles.

I begin with verse 20, for it sets for us where this incident happened.

“These words he spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple.”

Where is the treasury? It’s in the court of women.

I told you of one extra ceremony that took place in the time of the Feast of Tabernacles. One was the water ceremony which was the occasion for Jesus’ words, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.”

A second ceremony happened at sundown in the court of women section of the temple area. Four candelabras were set up in the corners of the court. These were huge things. Young men who were in line for the priesthood would climb up the tall candles, pour oil into the lamps, and light them. Prayers were uttered, and then the Jewish people would celebrate through the night. This is a luminary celebration. Historians of the day write that the glow of the light from the lamps or candlesticks could be seen from miles away.

What was the purpose of this ceremony? Looking at some references I have, I found that there are two possible reasons for the ceremony. By the way, this ceremony was not originally started by instruction from God in the early books of the Bible. It was a Jewish tradition that made its way in what we call the Mishnah.

This first possible reason or the ceremony is that it pointed to something that happened after the people of Israel were allowed to leave Egypt. After God established the observance of the Passover, we find in Exodus 13:21.

<sup>21</sup> The LORD was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. <sup>22</sup>He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.

A few very reliable sources of information state that this luminary ceremony has as its purpose to remember the pillar of fire which was the presence of the Lord during the wilderness journey.

There is a second possible purpose for the ceremony that I found from a source for Jews for Jesus. It is to remember what happened in 2 Chronicles 7. The temple is built and completed. Solomon prays the dedication prayer. Then, the unexpected happened.

*Now when Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the house. <sup>2</sup> The priests could not enter into the house of the LORD because the glory of the LORD filled the LORD’S house. <sup>3</sup> All the sons of Israel, seeing the fire come down and the glory of the LORD upon the house, bowed down on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and they worshiped and gave praise to the LORD, saying, “Truly He is good, truly His lovingkindness is everlasting.”*

It could be that the Jews remembered the days when the Shekinah glory of God fell in fire and filled the temple. Oh, that the presence of God will once again illumine the temple as before. How fitting! For we go back to the words of Jesus in verse 12 that were spoken in the area where the luminary ceremony took place.

<sup>12</sup> Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not (not not) walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."

When we read or see or hear the words, "I am," inside our minds and our hearts there should be this "Honk, honk, honk!" of alert alarms going off. Why? Remember when Moses asked God, "When the people ask who sent me, what am I to tell them." God said, "I am." When Jesus spoke these words, literally it is, "I I am."

When the Jews heard the words, "I am the Light of the world," inside their minds and hearts they heard, "Honk, honk, honk!"

This brings us to the first point of a structured approach to this verse.

### **The Claim**

What is the claim? The claim is that He is co-equal to, co-existent with, and co-eternal with God the Father.

Psalm 27:1 LORD = YHWH = I am

Isaiah 42:6-7 "I am the LORD, I have called You in righteousness,  
I will also hold You by the hand and watch over You,  
And I will appoint You as a covenant to the people,  
As a light to the nations,  
<sup>7</sup>To open blind eyes,  
To bring out prisoners from the dungeon  
And those who dwell in darkness from the prison.

He is the Light of the World. He is the fulfillment of both views as to why this luminary ceremony takes place.

He is the pillar of fire that led the people through the wilderness, so He guides us through this pilgrimage that we call life.

He is the Shekinah glory of God that filled the temple of Solomon. Glimpses of His glory are witnessed throughout the gospels, but always shrouded in His humanity. He is God is the flesh dwelling among men.

With the claim comes a second point of our structure.

### **The Promise**

"They will not not walk in darkness, but will have the Light of life."

That is what the prophets foretold: Isaiah 42:7 – To open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the dungeon and those who dwell in darkness from the prison.

Light dispels the darkness.

Jesus dispels the darkness of spiritual blindness to give new spiritual sight.

Jesus dispels the darkness of falsehood to give light of truth.

Jesus dispels the darkness of death to bring life.

Jesus dispels the darkness of loneliness to give His companionship.

Jesus dispels the darkness of fear to bring about comfort and peace.

Jesus dispels the darkness of ignorance to bring about knowledge of Him that comes through experience.

Jesus dispels the darkness of hostility to give us the right to be called the friend of God.

From the darkness of realm of Satan to the full light of the Kingdom of God.

If we had the time, I bet some of you can give testimony to these realities.

### **The Condition**

He who follows me. Be a disciple of Jesus Christ. To follow Him is to stop following what you are following now, and start following Him. There is a big bible word for that—repentance.

Follow Him as a pupil of those days followed the teacher to live like the teacher to be like the teacher in all they did and said.

As we become followers of Christ, then come a commandment that is our responsibility to obey.

Matthew 5:14: You are the light of the world. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

We are the light, for Christ lives in us. The light is in us. The shekinah glory that ran the priests out of the temple is the glory that fills us. Shine your light.

From 1991 to 2007, Fuller Theological Seminary's School of Intercultural Studies conducted a survey among 750 Muslims who had converted to Christianity. Those surveyed represented 50 ethnic groups from 30 different countries. Here were the nine most-cited reasons for conversion to the Christian faith:

1. Christians practiced what they preached.
2. Christians appeared to have loving marriages in which women were treated as equals.
3. Christian-to-Christian violence was less prominent than Muslim-to-Muslim violence.
4. The prayers of Christians had healed the disabled and delivered others from demonic powers.
5. The Koran had produced profound disillusionment because it accentuates "God's punishment more than his love, and the use of violence to impose Islamic laws."
6. God had used visions and dreams to influence the converts' decision.
7. Muslims can never be certain of their forgiveness and salvation as Christians can.
8. As they read the Bible, the converts had been convicted of its truth.